

## Christ Is Not Embarrassed With Us!

“For both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one: for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren”(Hebrews 2:11). This is a glorious and liberating passage of Scripture that prompts us, in the spirit of The Three Musketeers, we are “one for all and all for one.” We are blessed to be in union with Christ! “He that sanctifieth...” is Jesus. “They who are sanctified...” is us. We are one with Him! This reminds us of another passage: “To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus” (Romans 3:26). We are so one with Christ that God says He is not ashamed to call us His brothers and sisters!

Think of some of the most embarrassing moments of your life. The truth is I could mention some embarrassing moments, but not all, because I am still trying to forget them and I would be obliged if you would do the same. So if in this writing you thought you were going to have complete transparency – forget about it! Even the great apostle said, “...forgetting those things which are behind...” (Philippians 3:13).

Therefore, if I may be quasi-transparent with you, I will mention a couple of embarrassing moments. In an attempt to save money, my mom got me some shoes on sale. It was the beginning of school and now I had a new pair of school shoes. Normally, I would have been thrilled. The shoes were of good quality leather, well-made and good interior support. However, it was not the interior I had the problem with - it was the exterior. You see, there was an apparent reason the shoes were so drastically reduced in price – they were red. I am not talking about burgundy or maroon, I mean red like a fire engine. Now in the 1950’s a boy would not be caught dead in red shoes. When I opened my new pair of shoes, I was put back a bit. But when I saw my mom’s beaming face, I knew it would only be proper to hold any misgivings to myself. Then again, I thought maybe my mom knew something I didn’t know. Mom had an expression when she would get us something to wear that she thought we might not like: “You’ll love it! It’s all the go!” Well, I had not been to school for ten minutes; I had not even made it to class before I understood most clearly that what I was wearing was not “all the go.” From the beginning of the school day to the close, I was mocked for wearing “girl shoes.” I could have shown the guys that if they would examine closer they would see these were definitely shoes for boys. There was no way I was going to do that; the less attention I could generate toward my feet, the better. I held my tears all day. When I came home, I lost it. I poured out my heart about the scorn I took for those shoes. After putting me to bed that night, she became a lady on a mission. She went to the store and purchased some shoe dye. She stayed up late dying my shoes black. When I woke up I had a pair of black boys shoes waiting for me. What a joy to go to school the next day and have no one looking down at my feet! It was a most pleasant, uneventful day.

In public junior high school, once every semester, the boys and girls physical education classes would join in and have dancing classes within the framework of one week. Dad would not permit myself or my siblings to participate. He said, we were Baptist and we do not dance. He might roll over in his grave if he could see many of the Baptists today. One day my physical education class was almost more than I could bear. The day came when we were supposed to start the days of dancing. I remember the girls coming into the center of the gym floor, a little shy, but you could perceive their joyous anticipation. The boys complained, but even they could not hide it; they were getting excited about holding these creatures who no longer had cooties. I had already, in the privacy of the office, given the coach the note from my dad, which read something to this effect, “My son, Johnny will not be dancing. It is against our religious convictions. If you have something to substitute in its place, he will be willing to follow your directive. Should you have any questions, you may contact me.” One of the most embarrassing moments in my youth came when we had been assembled together, the coach announced to the entire class, “Well gentlemen, we have a note here from Mr. Pope’s father.” Then he read it to the

class. There I stood in the midst of my peers, head down so I did not see their scornful faces, but I heard their laughter very clearly. After reading slowly and deliberately, the coach with a swagger and smirk asked, "Now does anybody else have a note like this for me?" One other boy from a holiness church gave the coach a note. His note was not read, but he was required along with myself to sit it out on the bleachers. We could feel their looks and hear some of their remarks. I could hardly wait for the class to end.

Now let me move three years into the future from my last story. I had been asked to bring the Baptist Training Course lesson in a mission church my dad had started when he was a Bible college professor. He and Mom were sitting together in the audience. I was really nervous! I was hoping people would not notice how out of place I felt and must have looked. With trembling hands and heart I began to speak, then God took over. I dropped the prepared lesson and felt a liberty. I have never had that kind of grace for book reports or any other type of public speech. The old Welsh have a Galaic name for it: "The hywl." It is when you are lost and caught up in the Spirit and you are speaking as the Holy Spirit gives you unction. That's what I was experiencing that night. My father looked at my mom and then back to me beaming. I knew without their saying a word, that this formerly embarrassing young man was no longer an embarrassment to them.

At that wonderful moment, it didn't matter what old school mates or coaches thought of me. My mom and dad were proud of me. They were not ashamed of me. They were not embarrassed to call me their son. At this point it didn't matter what my peer group thought of me; my parents were pleased with me and that's all that mattered.

Please allow me to make the application. We are too concerned at times with what the world thinks about us. We vie for popularity. We cheat to get ahead and gain prestige. We live in a dog-eat-dog world. Let us be reminded: "If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you" (John 15:19). "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him" (I John 2:15). Let the world laugh at our lifestyle; they will never have the joy we have behind our closed doors. Our goal should always be to please the Lord and not embarrass Him, because He was not embarrassed to hang naked on the cross for our sins. Let us say with Jesus, "And he that sent me is with me: the Father hath not left me alone; for I do always those things that please him" (John 8:29). I am humbled that the Lord of glory would declare, "...for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren" (Hebrews 2:11). Since Christ is not embarrassed with us, let us not be embarrassed with Him!

- Pastor Pope -

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